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ABSTRACT

This study investigated perceptions of cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and early field experience directors who were involved in supervising and evaluating preservice elementary teachers. It also addressed whether cooperating teachers and university supervisors were properly trained to be evaluators. Eight cooperating teachers, eight university supervisors, and seven field experience directors from midwestern universities participated. They completed three interview sessions where they (1) identified skills necessary for cooperating teachers and university supervisors as evaluators of early field experiences, (2) described training available to them, and (3) discussed ideal training programs. Results found that most cooperating teachers did not receive much professional development in evaluation, and that universities did not take the lead in providing it. Available training ranged from an introductory meeting to a three-credit course. Evaluators and administrators agreed that teachers would not welcome mandated training. Directors did not see much benefit to training cooperating teachers, though cooperating teachers recognized and appreciated the benefit of training. University supervisors received no training in evaluation or supervision, nor did they express a desire to be trained. Participants differed in the types of training they preferred. Directors were more involved in training cooperating teachers than were university supervisors. (Contains 12 references). (SM)

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Training for cooperating teachers and university supervisors in their role as evaluators in early field experiences

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Training for cooperating teachers and university supervisors in their role as evaluators in early field experiences

Change is a key word that has often been associated with teacher education. Since the 1980s there have been a variety of reports on teacher educational reforms that have emerged in response to the public's rising concern for more accountability in our schools (Holmes Group, 1986; Carnegie Forum on Education, 1986; National Commission on America's Future & Teaching, 1996). In response, the teacher education community has begun rigorous efforts towards establishing and enforcing higher standards for the teaching profession. One aspect of fulfilling this mission is greater emphasis on the supervision and evaluation of field experiences.

As teacher education programs place more importance on field experiences, several questions arise. Are cooperating teachers adequately prepared to observe, analyze, guide, and evaluate the field experience teacher? Can teacher education programs afford to permit the untrained to supervise the inexperienced when field experiences are so important? This study addresses the gap between recommended training practices and those practices the literature and current research describe as common in the field. More specifically, this study investigates the perceptions of cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and directors of early field experiences involved in the supervision and evaluation of elementary education preservice teachers. After a brief review of the research on training practices, this paper will describe a qualitative study (Ramanathan, 1996) that suggests that universities do not have a comprehensive plan for training cooperating teachers and university supervisors in their role as evaluators. This paper will conclude with recommendations on both content and format for a professional development program for evaluators in early field experiences.

Background

Research studies and recommendations for practice describe training for cooperating teachers as that which focues on the purpose of evaluation, the role of evaluation, the positive effects, and lack of training. The purpose of evaluation in early field experiences should be to highlight to preservice teachers their progress in areas that have been identified as important for these experiences - planning and organization, and personal characteristics (McIntyre & Norris, 1980). The evaluation form must reflect the goals of the experience and the tasks specified for the preservice teachers, with a focus on suitability and compatibility with the profession, professional attitudes, and behavior (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). The purpose of evaluation is an important aspect to include when training cooperating teachers.

The role of evaluator, a role in which university supervisors are primarily cast (Williams, Smith, Ramanathan & Lipsett, 1995), is a source of confusion for both cooperating teachers and university supervisors. In only 40% of the cases are cooperating teachers asked for their input into the evaluation forms that they use, though these forms may be based on activities they define in their role as instructor (McIntyre & Norris, 1980). In more than 50% of the cases the university supervisors award the final grades while the cooperating teachers are expected to be consulted but do not have the deciding vote (McIntyre & Norris, 1980; Williams et al., 1995). This is a point of contention that needs explanation during training sessions.

The positive effects of training on cooperating teachers have been established by research. Training for cooperating teachers could affect their behavior and provide them ways of dealing with the demands of the situation. Preservice teachers are more likely to have active, sequential and systematically evaluated experiences with trained cooperating teachers (Killian & McIntyre, 1986). Training of cooperating teachers also ensures that

preservice teachers are more engaged in teaching full groups, prepare and plan more, and have more interactions with pupils (Killian & McIntyre, 1985; 1987).

Unfortunately, research about professional training programs does not reflect this importance. Requiring course work in supervision is typically not part of the criteria for selecting cooperating teachers (Haberman & Harris, 1982; Kingen, 1984). In fact, programs that prepare cooperating teachers are often not readily available. Therefore, they are not expected. Applegate and Lasley (1982) suggested developing programs for training cooperating teachers in order to clarify the roles to be performed and skills are to be encouraged. Professional development programs would help address questions and problems experienced by cooperating teachers.

School districts are held responsible for the professional development of their faculty while colleges of education are responsible for the specialized training of cooperating teachers. Thus, the responsibility of a college of education should be to provide instructional training and on-going assessment for cooperating teachers, making effective supervision more of a reality for all field experience students. Based on the findings above, the present qualitative sought to investigate the perceptions of cooperating teachers, university supervisors and directors of early field experiences involved in the supervision and evaluation of elementary education preservice teachers. More specifically, it sought to identify the perceptions of the training evaluators receive and the training experiences they would like to have.

Method

Eight cooperating teachers, eight university supervisors, and seven directors of field experiences in elementary education in a midwestern state were randomly selected to participate in the study. The participants were from institutions that represent a wide

spectrum as categorized by the Carnegie classification of institutions of higher education. All participants were interviewed in three sessions for about 90 minutes each. The areas of concern included: (a) identification of skills they thought were necessary for cooperating teachers and university supervisors in their role of evaluator in early field experiences, (b) a description of the training available to them, and (c) an ideal training course / seminar / program, especially the personnel and the infrastructure of facilities and time required of a successful program.

The interviews were transcribed and the data analyzed qualitatively. Member checks were conducted; participants were provided opportunities to read and respond to transcripts of their interviews. A peer debriefer performed many functions in the course of this study: checking the focus and quality of the data collection; and three independent raters were involved in formulating the categories and in data triangulation. A description of the training processes in place for the cooperating teachers and the suggestions of the participants were recorded and analyzed.

Results

The preparedness of the cooperating teacher for the task of evaluation is an important issue in early field experiences. However, training is not mandatory for the cooperating teachers to supervise or evaluate the field experience students. Both evaluators and administrators agreed that making training mandatory for cooperating teachers would be both unrealistic and unwelcome. A director of field experiences remarked that teachers might be "irate" if training were made compulsory.

On their part, the cooperating teachers were aware that training would be unpopular if required. "There's quite a resistance to teacher training," admitted one cooperating teacher candidly, while another stated that s/he would find it "almost insulting if you had to take it every

quarter as a refresher." Another cooperating teacher said that s/he "eventually ... would try to take the course if (she) really wanted to do it."

Only one cooperating teacher was enthusiastic about training becoming mandatory. S/he said that s/he would "welcome" the opportunity to train. The only condition s/he would find onerous would be if s/he had to pay for it. If the training were to be free, s/he would look forward to it.

> C7: I think that would be a very good thing actually. I would welcome that because I often sit there and think, 'Am I looking for the right thing? Am I hitting the mark? Am I missing mark?' ... That would be excellent.

Of the eight cooperating teachers two of them had received training specifically to supervise students, but their training was more than 15 years old. A director of field experiences, who is also a university supervisor, had been trained in her/his doctoral program to supervise but that also was more than 15 years ago. Another director had attended a course in supervision within the past few years. Neither of these directors was trained in the evaluation of field experience students.

The directors were divided on the question whether cooperating teachers should be provided training or not. Three of them firmly believed that it is necessary. They were aware that the teachers are "very concerned" about evaluation and that cooperating teachers recognize it as "an area of weakness."

> D7: Somebody just has to take the initiative and say this ought to be done. And after that it's just putting your money where your mouth is. You just have to do it.

A third director suggested that perhaps cooperating teachers could be required to take the course or attend the introductory meeting if "there've been major changes in the program." Otherwise, rehashing something that the cooperating teachers were familiar with would not be of much help. In other words, training should be provided on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Three of the directors did not see the need for any specific training to be offered to the cooperating teachers. They were "not sure that's really necessary." Another director suggested that perhaps the cooperating teachers "would not need so much training" as an orientation to the program. A third director declared that cooperating teachers do not need any skills-enhancement but could be motivated in their role as mentors.

> D1: I suppose if anything were done it would be to improve the morale of that particular teacher, which ... is not necessarily teaching the skills. But a good inspirational teacher or a good inspirational speaker... that can get them wound up or excited about what they're doing .. is probably more valuable than any kind of supervisory training that ... we might provide them.

Contrary to the perceptions of these directors, the cooperating teachers were unanimous in their recognition of the "benefit" of training. All of them appreciated any training they could get. They were hesitant about voicing the details of their responsibilities as evaluators. Various aspects of evaluation that the cooperating teachers have questions about included the following: grading and the implication of grades; counseling a student with a problem; offering negative criticism; and using and interpreting the evaluation instruments.

Training offered in these institutions ranged from an introductory meeting which lasted 30 to 45 minutes to a three-credit course. Four institutions offered introductory meetings which, in one case, the director acknowledged as "very minimal." Interestingly, in one of those institutions, though the university supervisors claimed that a meeting was held to acquaint the cooperating teachers with the program, the cooperating teacher who was part of the study was not aware of it. Three institutions offered courses that the cooperating teachers were encouraged to take while one offered workshops on request at the district level.

Logistics of training sessions

An analysis regarding the times and types of training showed a difference in perception between university personnel and cooperating teachers. One of the university supervisors was of the opinion that the cooperating teachers do not place enough importance on their role as cooperating teachers. She /he conceded, "It is also unrealistic, unfortunately, that teachers will not feel committed to come after school to meet with the campus supervisor."

The university is geared towards offering courses or summer workshops with an extensive agenda. Planning includes up to a sequence of three three-credit courses.

On the other hand, cooperating teachers prefer meetings and workshops to courses. They are not averse to staying for an evening meeting for a couple of hours. This was a preference over summer workshops or weekend sessions. One cooperating teacher described an occasion when this had been made possible.

> C7: They [the university faculty] invited us ... We came from our classrooms at the end of the day. They had dinner for us and we spent the evening and they shared what we need to do with us.

This is made easier when the cooperating teachers are in one building, as in a professional development school when all the teachers are in the same building and have the same schedule (breaks, holidays, etc.). Planning a training session for them is less difficult.

The problems faced in providing training for the cooperating teachers are two-fold. At an institutional level, it involves resources, especially financial. Cooperating teachers supervising student teachers can get time off from their classroom, leaving the student teacher in charge. The early field experience mentor, on the other hand, cannot have the field experience student teaching without her/his supervision. Thus it is difficult for cooperating teachers to find time when they can get together for a training session.

If the university has to make arrangements for cooperating teachers to be relieved from their teaching duties to attend training workshops, substitutes will have to be hired. This means an outlay in finance to support a substitute, which is not within the means of most institutions.

> U8: [For the supervisors of] student teachers, the university has meetings twice a quarter where the cooperating teachers are invited to the university and they do spend time in various training programs. I wish that we could have the same thing happen at the junior level but once again you're talking about financial things. You [are] either talking about substitutes or the building taking care of the classes for the teachers come on campus. So it's not just realistic to think we can get cooperating teachers to come during the day.

Another obstacle to training cooperating teachers is posed by administrators in the school building. A director observed that there are "some building principals that do give their teachers a hard time and .. feel it is not necessary for them to leave."

Content of training sessions

Purposes of field experiences

Introductory meetings arranged by universities at the beginning of the semester concentrated on acquainting the cooperating teachers with the purpose of field experiences and their responsibilities in terms of the kind of supervision expected of them. Both cooperating teachers and directors were interested in the introductory meetings where the purpose of field experiences were explained. This provided a chance "for everybody to sit down and to really understand expectations." The broad picture of "what courses, how we go about, what we're expecting from our students" helped the cooperating teachers understand the perspective that they should have, in both their expectations and evaluations of the students. As one director of field experiences said,

> D7: It would be helpful to have a very clear explanation of university expectations of the participants so that [the cooperating teachers] can work more intelligently, [and] more appropriately respond to the participants.

The directors for the most part understood the efficacy of such meetings. They planned well in advance for such meetings, if possible. If cooperating teachers are not able to attend, it was suggested that the university supervisors be responsible for acquainting the cooperating teachers with the required materials.

> D7: I've already sent the information to the cooperating teachers that there is a meeting on August the 19th. And in the event that a cooperating teacher could not be there because of vacation plans or whatever, then that person who is in charge of student teaching meets with the person individually.

These meetings were welcomed by cooperating teachers who were also conscious that knowledge of the expectations of the university would help them supervise and evaluate the field experiences with greater ease and integrity.

> C7: We had to write a narrative about the students and they pulled this in close to the end and talked about what they expected in the narrative and pretty much what their expectations were in terms of what would be a qualified teacher. I found that very beneficial. Made my writing of the final narrative much easier.

Early field experiences are usually associated with specific courses on campus. The instructor for the course is not always the supervisor in the field. An initial meeting could involve the instructor who explains the content of the course, the university supervisor who details the procedures expected of the cooperating teachers, and the cooperating teachers and students who will then be able to clearly understand their roles and responsibilities. Thus all the evaluators and supervisors could meet initially with the instructors of the course to share information and views on the field experience.

> D7: What I think might be very helpful is if somehow there could be a meeting of the cooperating teacher, the college supervisor, the instructor of the course and the student to see that these are our expectations, they are the same expectations for all of us ... A more inclusive kind of communication.

The findings also revealed that the cooperating teachers were critical of meetings that were social events. If they are to invest time, they would like to get something in return which would be more meaningful and useful to them.

> C5: [The university] does have a night when they call us together and it's kind of an introduction type thing, but I guess it's not in depth, and I don't feel ... it addresses the problems that we've been talking about.

Courses in supervision offered by the university should be program-specific. They should explain the focus of the program, describe the field experiences, their relation to the courses on campus, and provide cooperating teachers with skills necessary for supervising these field experiences rather than specific evaluation skills..

> D2: We have a special course that we have designed for them to enhance their supervisory skills, to understand our curriculum, to know what we're trying to teach and they interact with our faculty members who teach those courses, and the we teach them a lot of supervisory skills.

A university supervisor who described the training in terms of three courses rather than a short introductory meeting stated that s/he planned "one course definitely dealing with an overview of theoretical and conceptual ideas" that would introduce the cooperating teachers to the principles on which the program is built.

Evaluation tools

Apart from introductory meetings and course offerings, universities attempt to share information about early field experiences with cooperating teachers in a packet of material. These packets might contain the following: a description of the course to which the field experiences is attached; the purpose of the field experiences; a description of roles and responsibilities of cooperating teachers and students in the field experiences; and evaluation

forms to be used by the cooperating teachers in the field experiences. This could be a major source of information for the cooperating teachers.

Most often the cooperating teachers do not read the package. They feel that they are inundated with paperwork in their own classroom, and they are not inclined to read any more than is necessary. They would prefer a more personal approach to learning about the evaluation process and the instruments to be used in the process.

> C7: A lot of colleges seem to ... give you a ton of paperwork to read but the problem is we're getting paperwork from every one. And I think it's better when you can interact face to face.

While they appreciated becoming acquainted with the expectations of the field experiences, the cooperating teachers would also like these meetings to provide an explanation of the evaluation tools that they are required to use, "to give them some examples of evaluative tools rather than the one we have at our school."

However, evaluation skills such as training in and exposure to various evaluation instruments and tools, conferencing skills and collaboration skills are not explained in detail in the packets given to the cooperating teachers. Nor are they discussed at length at the introductory meeting. Meetings usually last for about 30 or 40 minutes, and the time is spent on explaining the field experiences to the cooperating teachers. The tools may be discussed briefly, but with all the other information that they are exposed to in this short time, the cooperating teachers are likely to overlook this bit of information.

> C7: I don't recall that they actually gave us the instrument that we were going to use to evaluate. They may have. Now that I remember, there was a packet of materials that they gave us at this meeting. And I'm sure that we went over it, very briefly, the tool.

Some directors agreed that this is an important piece of information that the cooperating teachers could use. The director of one institution was understanding of the cooperating teachers' need to know and be familiar with the evaluation instruments. S/he

also conceded that it was the responsibility of the university to acquaint them with the tools available to them.

> D4: First of all they need to be nurtured to truly give feedback to see if that is their role and see if that is important. I think you need to share with them the different forms of observation and critique. They're very comfortable oftentimes with forms and so we have a dozen that they can choose from.

The chances of the cooperating teachers getting exposure to evaluation instruments and assessment forms is greater if the training is extended to a course. In such a context, time permits them to role play the situation of evaluation and get familiar with the tools and instruments.

> U6: In the first session ... we shared the evaluation instrument and give them suggestions on other kinds of very open -ended instruments that could be used in order for them to record their observation.

Negative comments

While evaluation tools may be an important component of the evaluation process, the cooperating teachers also have other problems. These may include the need to tell a student that improvement is necessary in certain areas; for example, how to be "more objective" if a grade has to be given; how to offer "suggestions for improvements so that the student can take them in a positive way."

Many cooperating teachers are unaware of grades and what they imply. They do not always understand how to objectively rate the students. They would like to know what the university's standards are and how these grades are interpreted at the university. One way of acquainting them with the criteria may be for university supervisors to share their own grades with the cooperating teachers for purposes of comparison. Cooperating teachers

would also gain an understanding of the university's views of good teaching when shown examples of these types.

> C7: I would like to see a video or something where the college would say to me, 'This is [an example of a grade].' Like the form at [the university] uses *Meets Minimum Expectation.*. I would like to see what they consider a student at that level, how they operate.

When courses are offered, among other topics, principles of evaluation and the process and instruments used are examined more carefully. The cooperating teachers recognize evaluation at this stage as a formative process and use it as a learning tool.

> D2: We talk about: ... How do you evaluate? What's the criteria? What should you be expecting from these students? What does your final evaluation really mean? Is it something that's going to be a learning experience for them? Is it simply a grade that says nothing? What if you don't feel that this person belongs in education and the grade is very low?

The cooperating teachers are not trained to handle the more subtle and difficult aspects of evaluation, for example, offering negative comments, "if there's a problem, ways to say what the problem is." They are hesitant to make negative remarks about students for fear of jeopardizing their future. Training in how to phrase these comments and acceptable and alternative modes of presenting these unpalatable ideas give a cooperating teacher the confidence to approach a difficult situation.

> D8: The major training that I do is, I provide what we call an evaluation workshop which helps them [the cooperating teachers] write out what it is they need to say about the student's performance and helps them look at ways of phrasing. For instance, if the student is an exemplary student, how do you use [words] that sound professional, that will express that exemplary performance as opposed to somebody who is highly successful or somebody who is average or somebody who is adequate or somebody who needs work? A lot of the evaluation used to be written on potential: This person has the potential of being a good teacher. Which doesn't say anything! So we really don't like them to use phrases like that but be much more specific and give us some more direct information on the student's ability, performance ability at that point..

> C2: [The workshop] really did give me the confidence to do and to say things I knew had to be said. It gives us some vocabulary. ... Probably what I would need may be words and techniques to better help the student, better encourage them

without discouraging them. It's very difficult to say, 'That lesson was really junky. This is what you should do to fix it up.' ... So I would like probably just some words and techniques to do that.

Training for university supervisors

University supervisors are themselves not trained specifically in evaluation or supervision. None of the university supervisors in the study had undergone any training as an evaluator but neither did they, unlike the cooperating teachers, express a strong desire to be trained.

Most of the university supervisors admitted that any knowledge they had of evaluation was gleaned from their experience rather than from any formal training. It was their experience as school teachers and cooperating teachers supervising student teachers that enabled them to understand the process of evaluation in field experiences.

U6: I think experience. I taught in an elementary school for 14 years. And during that time I probably had 30 university students and I think that's how I learned from the teacher's perspective about what works and what's needed.

In one case the university supervisor was given the evaluation forms without an opportunity for extensive discussion. In this instance the university supervisor was given much the same information the cooperating teachers in the field experience would get, in a packet at a short, hurried meeting.

U5: At our very first meeting we were given a set of forms that we talked were pre-constructed ... We went over them very briefly and were told at what time in the quarter they were to be completed.

Three institutions in the study offer courses in supervision that university supervisors could take in conjunction with cooperating teachers. However, information about these courses is not readily and freely available. A university supervisor disclaimed all knowledge of the course offered at her/his university.

The directors' suggestions for areas for training of university supervisors included the purpose of the field experience, theories of supervision, collaboration and conferencing skills, evaluation skills, and knowledge of evaluation tools. In some institutions the training is extensive, indepth and sustained. The director or a member of the faculty may conduct the training and keep in close touch with university supervisors to judge what else might be necessary to extend their repertoire or improve their skill.

> D8: [Training for university supervisors] is something we have a little more control over. And we do provide a training session for our campus supervisors. Any time we get a new campus supervisor, we have a half day orientation for them. And then I always meet with all of the campus supervisors every quarter. And work with them and each time we probably take a problem, or a concern or something and deal with it.

> U3: And we had to do a clinical supervision model on that teacher. And so not just looking at the forms, but actually using them and then weave them when we did like the pre-observation interview and post-observation interview. We actually did role play.

However, most training that is available to the university supervisors is cursory and practical. It consists of the nuts and bolts of how, what and when rather than the why of evaluation.

> U5: I think it would be useful to have some course work. Or at least a longer session than just a very brief [one] for less that an hour of talking over the forms and things.

> D1: Not an extensive training session in there. Our graduate college runs a week's training session before school starts. And within that training session is time for the departments to work with their new GAs [graduate assistants]. So we do meet but most of it is going to be [to] map out the particular job that they have through the semester in terms of getting kids on vans, getting the assigned to teachers and all that. So it's minimal in terms of the supervisory part. It's more the day-to-day paperwork kinds of things that they get training in.

Yet, an important opportunity to learn about evaluation that is available to university supervisors but less so to cooperating teachers is at professional conferences. Regional and national professional meetings, especially on teacher education, which may be attended by university supervisors would have sessions on supervision and evaluation. These are a rich

source of information to the university supervisors which should be used extensively by them and passed on to the cooperating teachers.

> U7: [The university supervisors] have the opportunity ... to go to workshops, ... to go to conferences. We also participate in other teacher training institutions and we also have the option for a whole lot of interaction with other people on professional levels, which some of the co-ops do not have.

Personnel in a training program

Between the directors and the university supervisors, the directors seemed to be more involved in training the cooperating teachers. Five out of eight directors were involved in projects that resulted in giving the cooperating teachers more information about the early field experiences and increasing their expertise as evaluators. By and large, the university supervisors do not appear to usually participate in the training offered to the cooperating teachers.

In one university, the university supervisor conducted the introductory meeting for the cooperating teachers in the schools on site. The director at the same university was responsible for delivering a supervisory course on campus, the content of which included evaluatory models and principles and practices of evaluation.

Regarding who should conduct training sessions for the cooperating teachers, three of the cooperating teachers strongly suggested that university personnel must deliver the training, whether it be a meeting or a course.

> C7: Probably a team from the college which would include the supervisor person and the professor. I think they both should, I think it should be a team approach. I think we need both. I think we need to hear from both of them. We need to hear the meat of it from the professor. But then we also need to hear the theory and the evaluation from the supervisor.

The purpose might be better served for the cooperating teachers if the university supervisor conducts training sessions. As the person teaching the course or conducting the

associated seminar, the university supervisor will be in the best position to explain the purpose of the field experience and explicate the evaluation tools available to the university supervisor. A variation on this theme is cooperating teachers who have had experience at the university as "visiting inservice professors."

> C7: It was very clear what his [the instructor's] expectations were. So then it was very clear for me to evaluate whether or not they [the students] had met his expectations. So I felt it was a very good thing. It made it much easier.

But the university seemed to have a different view of who should conduct the training. One university supervisor felt that the success of the training imparted in a particular course could be attributed to the fact that the cooperating teachers recognized the opinions were "coming from other teachers in the same position" and therefore placed more reliance on it.

Discussion

It is clear from the study that most cooperating teachers and university supervisors do not receive professional development experiences in their role of evaluator. The university has not taken a lead role in providing such experiences. One de-motivating factor may be that universities need cooperating teachers to make their field experiences successful and are not "brave" enough to say, "In order to be a cooperating teacher you must attend [a training session]." Given this attitude of the university, training may not be mandatory for cooperating teachers. Since their evaluatory duties in early field experiences appear to be a one-shot affair (Ramanathan, 1996), university supervisors do not always perceive the need to be trained formally for the role of an evaluator. This state of affairs does not augur well for the professionalization of evaluators in early field experiences .

However, considering its positive effects, training should be strongly suggested. If training is considered necessary, universities should provide such experiences for university

supervisors, proving that the university is serious about improving the efficiency of the evaluator. In larger institutions where graduate assistants are most often university supervisors, the opportunity to learn about evaluation at conferences may be minimal and peripheral. Such experiences may also not be available to them until they are well into their experience as evaluators. If the university expects these supervisors to learn from the research community, a conscious effort must be made to ensure that the evaluators are afforded these opportunities.

Cooperating teachers and university supervisors need to resolve their differing perceptions about early field experiences and their roles as evaluators (Applegate & Lasley, 1986; Ramanathan, 1996). Cooperating teachers have also indicated their desire to have closer ties with the university supervisors in their role as evaluators (Ramanathan, 1996). Training sessions may be forums for cooperating teachers and university supervisors to negotiate their understanding of field experiences and their respective responsibilities. University supervisors who have been prepared through courses in supervision may have a clear idea of the field experiences and the evaluator's role. Thus, university supervisors may be more effective as trainers of cooperating teachers. In professional development schools, for example, this may result in university supervisors training the cooperating teachers informally during their conferences.

Ironically, rather than professionalizing university supervisors initially, training sessions for evaluators in early field experiences seem to be aimed at cooperating teachers. Both directors and university supervisors discuss training in terms of what cooperating teachers need. The dialogue hardly encompasses the experiences needed to make the university supervisors more effective and efficient. It is hardly surprising that cooperating teachers have an less clear view of the skills and knowledge university supervisors require in their role as evaluators.

Cooperating teachers typically have students in a variety of different field experiences with different purposes. Further, some universities tend to have students widely dispersed in various schools over a large geographic area. Therefore, not all cooperating teachers who mentor students in the same field experience are readily available for training. However, cooperating teachers have expressed their willingness to be instructed in specific aspects of evaluation, e.g. interpreting purposes and evaluation criteria of field experiences, writing negative evaluations, and awarding grades. It only needs to find a suitable format in which to provide the training.

First, universities need to make it clear that they believe training for evaluators in early field experiences is important. The university could pay for substitutes or provide stipends for cooperating teachers attending a training session. A financial investment of this kind will also signal the importance the institution places on the field experience and the evaluators.

Secondly, the format of the training session could be a meeting or a workshop held after school on site. With the concept of professional development schools or teachers in a school building working closely together, providing training at a suitable time should be less difficult. All cooperating teachers should be required to attend if they are unfamiliar with the purposes of the field experiences or with the evaluation instruments used in field experiences. The cooperating teachers should regularly be introduced to new research-based ideas and insights. Sessions conducted on-site may also involve principals who need to be convinced about the concept of cooperating teachers as evaluators and teacher educators.

Finally, school-university collaboration should be extended to ties at the district level. To reach a larger audience and provide a more wholistic professional development program, these training sessions could be offered as part of the inservice program designed by the school district.

Thus, if the university were to provide the leadership, a corpus of professionally prepared evaluation personnel is possible. So far the literature shows that there have been few attempts at providing cooperating teachers and university supervisors with the skills and knowledge they need to be efficient evaluators. It remains to be seen whether universities will place reliance on research and provide adequate training for evaluators in early field experiences in the future.

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